

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

June 4, 2003

PEDRO POINT HEADLANDS COASTAL TRAIL

File No. 03-050

Project Manager: Prentiss Williams

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Disbursement of an amount not to exceed \$200,000 to the City of Pacifica for the construction of a segment of the Coastal Trail over the Pedro Point Headlands.

LOCATION: Pedro Point Headlands, City of Pacifica, San Mateo County (Exhibit 1)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Coastal Access

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following Resolution pursuant to Sections 31400-31409 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of an amount not to exceed two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) to the City of Pacifica for the construction of a section of the Coastal Trail connecting Pacifica State Beach with the Devils Slide right-of-way, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of funds for construction, the City of Pacifica (the City) shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy:
 - a. Evidence that the City has obtained all necessary permits and approvals and has conducted all necessary environmental review.
 - b. A signing plan for the project acknowledging Conservancy participation.
 - c. A final work plan (including the names of any subcontractors to be used in the completion of the project), and a project schedule and budget.
 - d. An agreement between the City and the California Department of Transportation sufficient to allow the project to be built, operated for public access, and maintained for a period of no less than twenty years.
 - e. Evidence that the City has obtained rights to use certain privately owned land sufficient to allow the project to be built, operated for public access, and maintained for a period of no less than twenty years.

2. The City shall implement, or shall cause to be implemented, the mitigation measures contained in the City's Mitigated Negative Declaration, Exhibit 2 to the accompanying staff recommendation, for the project."

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

"Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the purposes and objectives of Sections 31400 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code regarding coastal access.
 2. The proposed project is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 24, 2001.
 3. The Coastal Conservancy has independently reviewed the City's Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Plan (attached to the accompanying staff recommendation as Exhibit 2) for the project and finds that there is no substantial evidence that the project may have a significant effect on the environment.
 4. The proposed project will serve greater than local needs."
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PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy authorize the disbursement of an amount not to exceed two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) to the City of Pacifica for the construction of a section of the Coastal Trail connecting Pacifica State Beach with the Devil's Slide right-of-way (Exhibit 3). The proposed project will implement an important component of the *Pedro Point Headlands Trail System Concept Plan*, completed in 1999 by the Pacifica Land Trust (PLT) and the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCAP) in consultation with the City of Pacifica and the Coastal Conservancy. The proposed project will also complete the last segment of the Coastal Trail in City of Pacifica, culminating more than 10 years of effort on the part of the City and its partners. With the construction of this trail segment, the City will have completed 7 miles of continuous trail along the coast within the city limits that provides pedestrians, bicyclists, and wheelchair users with a safe alternative to the Highway 1 shoulder.

The proposed trail would link the City of Pacifica with the Devil's Slide highway right-of-way, which will be opened as a part of the California Coastal Trail upon completion of the Devil's Slide highway tunnel. The trail would be 7,700 feet long, 2,900 feet of which would be constructed on private property and the remainder on property owned by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Coastal Conservancy. The trail would begin at Crespi Drive near Pacifica State Beach, and continue south, going through private property up and over Pedro Point. The City has obtained agreements from the owner of the private parcel sufficient to enable the City to develop and maintain this section of the trail. The trail would then continue over Coastal Conservancy property and Caltrans right-of-way and will terminate near the planned entrance to the future Highway 1 Tunnel. Once the tunnel is opened to highway traffic, Caltrans will allow the

old Devil's Slide highway route to be used as a pedestrian and bicycle trail. The Pedro Point Headlands trail would link the future Devil's Slide Trail with the existing Pacifica Coastal Trail.

Although the topography of the proposed trail route is steep, the City plans to grade the trail in a manner that complies with ADA standards for trails. The trail could then be topped with a hard surface, enabling use by wheelchair riders. A hard surface would also allow use of the trail by bicyclists. Currently, only able-bodied persons can hike out to the edge of Pedro Point to appreciate the views, and there is no safe route for pedestrians, bicyclists or wheelchair users to travel from Pacifica State Beach to the Devils Slide area. The highway shoulder is very narrow in this area and visibility is poor. The proposed trail would remedy this situation by separating trail users from automobile traffic. By providing a safe and pleasant alternative to automobile travel, the proposed project would also provide contribute to improved local air quality.

Even before the opening of the Devil's Slide right-of-way as a trail, the proposed Pedro Point Headlands Trail would have the immediate benefit of providing new access to the Pedro Point Headlands. The Pedro Point Headlands provide some of the finest coastal vistas in the entire Bay Area (some would say the State), offering sweeping views of coast, San Pedro Bay, the Rockaway Beach headlands, the Golden Gate, the Marin Headlands, Point Reyes and Montara Mountain. Currently, the only access to Pedro Point is from trailheads located in the Pedro Point neighborhood of Pacifica, where the streets are extremely narrow and parking limited. The proposed trail would provide a trailhead near Pacifica State Beach, which is easily accessible from Highway 1 and where parking is plentiful, thus enabling many more people to enjoy this spectacular property.

Site Description: The Pedro Point Headlands is a large promontory located at the southern edge of the City of Pacifica. The developed portion of Pedro Point is mostly residential. The Coastal Conservancy owns approximately 98 acres of the undeveloped portion and the City of Pacifica owns another 169 acres (Exhibit 4). The property consists of a north-south ridge at the crest of the ocean bluff, and two east-west ridges with valleys in between. The land rises almost vertically from the ocean to a height of 625 feet. The main valley forms a small watershed feeding into San Pedro Creek. The only level land on the property is found at the floor of the main valley and at the top of the ridgelines. The Pedro Point Headlands host healthy communities of native vegetation, including areas of reedgrass prairie, which has been identified by the Department of Fish & Game as a rare plant community type. The proposed trail has been routed so as to avoid adverse impacts to this plant community.

Project History: The Coastal Conservancy acquired the Pedro Point Headlands in 1995 in order to prevent further private development on the headlands. It is expected that the property will be transferred to the National Park Service for inclusion in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) once federal legislation is passed expanding the GGNRA boundary to include the Pedro Point Headlands. Following the acquisition, PLT coordinated with the RTCAP, the Coastal Conservancy, and the City of Pacifica to prepare the *Pedro Point Headlands Trail System Concept Plan* (the Plan). The Plan was completed in August 1999. The proposed trail would accomplish several of the Access Objectives identified in the Plan (Exhibit 5).

PROJECT FINANCING:

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|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Coastal Conservancy | \$ 200,000 |
| City of Pacifica | 100,000 |
| Caltrans | <u>800,000</u> |
| Total Project Cost | \$1,100,000 |

The expected source of Conservancy funds for the proposed project is the Coastal Conservancy's FY 2000/01 Proposition 12 (the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000) budget appropriation for the Coastal Trail. Consistent with the purposes of this funding source, the grant would be used to develop public use facilities in a coastal area within the Conservancy's jurisdiction. Consistent with Section 5096.346(c) of Proposition 12, the proposed project would provide air quality benefits by facilitating pedestrian and bicycle travel.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 9 of the Conservancy's enabling legislation: Division 21 of the Public Resources Code (Sections 31400-31409), regarding public access and enjoyment of coastal resources. Section 31400 states that the Conservancy shall have a principal role in the implementation of a system of public accessways to and along the state's coastline. Through the proposed action, the Conservancy will play a primary role by funding the development of an important link in the California Coastal Trail.

Section 31400.1 allows the Conservancy to award grants to a public agency for accessways that serve more than local public needs. Consistent with this section, the subject of the proposed action is a link in the California Coastal Trail, a trail system of statewide significance. A trail link connecting San Francisco with the Devil's Slide will attract visitors from throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. The beaches and trails of Pacifica already attract more than 150,000 visitors per year from throughout the greater Bay Area. When the old Devil's Slide Highway is opened as a trail, the number of visitors to this area can be expected to increase. Pedro Point itself is a feature of regional, if not statewide significance and the proposed project will enable greater public access to this remarkable place.

Section 31400.2 requires the Conservancy to consider a number of factors in determining the amount of funding for an access project. Consistent with this section, the proposed level of funding was evaluated relative to the total amount of funding available to the Conservancy for coastal access projects. Also consistent with this section, the fiscal resources of the applicant have been taken into account. In this case, the City of Pacifica has very limited funds available for recreational trails. In spite of fiscal constraints, the City has been able to develop its Coastal Trail by leveraging its own funds with grants from state and local agencies. The City has committed \$100,000 to the proposed project.

Section 31400.2 also stipulates that the level of funding for an access project be determined by an application of factors prescribed by the Conservancy for the purpose of determining project eligibility and priority. Consistent with this requirement, and as dis-

cussed in greater detail in the section below, the project has been evaluated and found to be consistent with the Conservancy's project selection criteria and guidelines.

Section 31400.3 states that the Conservancy may assist public agencies in developing and implementing a system of public accessways to and along the state's coastline. The proposed project will further these goals by improving and enhancing a major public accessway in a heavily-visited coastal region as part of a regional, comprehensive public access plan.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STANDARDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACCESSWAY LOCATION AND DEVELOPMENT:

Staff has reviewed the City's trail design and determined that the proposed accessway would be consistent with the Conservancy's "Standards and Recommendations" in the following respects: (1) the location of the trailhead would reduce the number of trail users parking in the adjoining residential neighborhood, thus the trail would be located in a manner that will prevent parking congestion and crowding and ensure the privacy of adjoining residences (Standards No. 1 & 4); (2) the proposed trail would not increase any hazard such as fire or erosion (Standard No. 2); (3) the proposed trail would not be closer than 10 feet to an existing residence and would serve to connect a road with a scenic overlook (Standard No. 8) and (4) the trail developed on the Pedro Point Headlands would be made wheelchair accessible (Standard No. 13).

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted January 24, 2001, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Support of the public:** The proposed project has the support of Assemblyman Gene Mullin, State Senator Jackie Speier, the Pacifica Bicycle Committee, and the Pacifica Land Trust. Letters received in support of the project are included in Exhibit 6.
4. **Location:** This project would be within the coastal zone of the City of Pacifica.
5. **Need:** Caltrans has agreed to provide up to \$800,000 to help construct the trail in exchange for permission to use the trail corridor for a utility corridor for the Highway Tunnel. In order to take advantage of this offer, the City must complete the surveying, rough grading and rough drainage this summer. The cost of this work is approximately \$300,000, of which the City has available only \$100,000. Without the Coastal

Conservancy grant, the City will not be able to finish the work required to qualify for the Caltrans funds.

6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The trails and beaches of Pacifica and its environs attract thousands of visitors from throughout the Bay Area. The Pedro Point Headlands is a coastal resource of regional significance and the Devil's Slide Trail, when open, will be a recreational trail of statewide significance.

Additional Criteria

7. **Urgency:** In order to capture the trail funds being offered by Caltrans, the City must accomplish the rough grading and associated work for the trail route by the end of the summer. In order to accomplish this the City will need to put the job out to bid no later than August 1st. It is therefore most urgent that the Conservancy funds be made available no later than that date.
8. **Resolution of more than one issue:** The proposed trail over the Pedro Point Headlands would not only provide an important link in the California Coastal Trail, it would make the spectacular Pedro Point Headlands more easily accessible for a wider variety of users.
9. **Leverage:** As discussed in the paragraphs above, the proposed Conservancy grant would enable the City to leverage \$800,000 of Caltrans funding for the trail project.
10. **Readiness:** The City has completed its environmental review and obtained all the necessary permits and is prepared to commence the project as soon as the funds become available.
11. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** As discussed in the "Project History" above, the proposed project would help carry out the goals of the "Pedro Point Headlands Trail System Concept Plan." The proposed project would also help achieve the Conservancy's goal of developing the California Coastal Trail.
12. **Cooperation:** The City of Pacifica has been able to negotiate an agreement with a private landowner to allow a portion of the Pedro Point Headlands Trail to be constructed on his property. The City has also secured the cooperation of Caltrans in constructing the trail and has obtained support from the GGNRA for the proposed alignment.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

The Land Use Plan of the City of Pacifica Local Coastal Program makes special note of the importance of the City's north-south pedestrian and bicycle pathway systems and proposes that the pedestrian pathway be separated from Highway 1. The proposed trail will separate trail users from Highway 1.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City of Pacifica, as lead agency, undertook environmental assessment of the proposed Pacifica State Beach Master Plan, which includes the construction of the Pedro Point Headlands trail, through

an Initial Study. The Initial Study determined that the proposed project could have possible significant effects on the environment in five areas: air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, and noise. Based on that Initial Study, the City incorporated several mitigation measures into the project to reduce these impacts to levels of insignificance. The City adopted the mitigated negative declaration and mitigation monitoring plan (attached as Exhibit 2) by resolution of its City Council on July 22, 2002. The City filed a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse and the County of San Mateo on August 13, 2002.

The potential environmental impacts of the Pedro Point Headlands Coastal Trail project and the corresponding mitigations, are identified and discussed in detail in Exhibit 2, and are summarized below:

Air Quality

Impact: Construction of the trail, including clearing and grading, could result in potentially significant increases in dust and locally elevated levels of particulate matter downwind from construction activities. **Mitigation:** The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) has identified a set of feasible Basic Control Measures for the control of dust and particulate matter on construction sites. These measures, which are enumerated in detail in Exhibit 2, shall be followed at all times on the construction site and will reduce air quality impacts to less-than-significant levels.

Biological Resources

Impact: Construction of the trail would involve the removal or trimming of 51 Monterey pine and 60 blue gum eucalyptus, and the clearance of other vegetation from the cut and filled slopes. **Mitigation:** The Monterey pine and the blue gum eucalyptus are not native to the area and provide relatively low value forest habitat. More than a third of the pines to be removed show evidence of pine pitch canker. Therefore, replacement of the trees is not recommended. Instead, the cleared areas will be revegetated with appropriate native species propagated from local stock.

Geology and Soils

Impact: Portions of the proposed Pedro Point Headlands trail would be located on slopes up to and exceeding 30 percent. While no major landslides have been observed on the project site, the potential exists for shallow landslides, which could be aggravated by cuts and fills and the placement of retaining walls. In addition, the trail would be located on soils with high erosion potential. **Mitigation:** To minimize the potential for shallow landslides, a licensed geotechnical engineer or engineering geologist shall prepare a grading plan for the proposed trail construction and shall direct all construction activities. The City shall prepare a drainage and erosion control plan, which will include a number of specific measures to minimize soil erosion. These measures are discussed in detail in Exhibit 2.

Cultural Resources

Impact: Although no cultural, historical or archeological resources have been identified on the proposed project site, there is potential for such sites to be discovered during sub-surface grading. **Mitigation:** Should any cultural, historic or archeological resources be uncovered in the course of project construction, all construction activities shall stop and the City shall retain a qualified archeologist to conduct a reconnaissance and identify measures to protect these resources.

Noise

Impact: Trail construction has the potential to temporarily generate ground borne vibration and excessive noise in the project vicinity. **Mitigation:** During construction, the City shall implement, and shall require all contractors to implement, equipment maintenance and management practices to reduce construction related noise. These practices are discussed in detail in Exhibit 2. In addition, all truck deliveries of construction materials and equipment to the project site shall be limited to between 7:00 am and 6:00 pm Monday through Friday. Construction may occur on Saturdays upon conditional approval of the City Engineer. A phone number shall be posted at the construction site of a project representative who will be available to respond to noise nuisance concerns.

Conservancy staff has independently reviewed the City's mitigated negative declaration and mitigation monitoring plan and concurs that the proposed project, as mitigated, will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment. Staff recommends that the Conservancy find that the project, as mitigated, will not have a significant effect on the environment as defined in 14 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 15382. Staff will file a Notice of Determination upon the Conservancy's authorization of the project.

EXHIBIT 2

Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Plan for the Pacifica State Beach Master Plan for Public Improvements

*Distributed to Board Members only;
available for public review at Conservancy office and at the Board Meeting.*

EXHIBIT 5

Goals and Objectives for the Pedro Point Headlands Trail System Concept Plan

EXHIBIT 6

Letters of Support

Any additional letters will be mailed separately and/or hand-carried to the Board Meeting.

PEDRO POINT HEADLANDS COASTAL TRAIL

Agenda Item 13.

June 4, 2003

EXHIBIT 2

**Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Plan
for the Pacifica State Beach Master Plan for Public Improvements**